



National Trust For Historic Preservation Names Columbus, Mississippi To Its 2008 List Of America's Dozen Distinctive Destinations

Unrivaled Destination for Southern Architecture and Down-Home Cooking

Washington, D.C. (February 7, 2008) - Today, the **National Trust for Historic Preservation** named **Columbus, Mississippi** one of its **2008 Dozen Distinctive Destinations**. Since 2000, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has annually selected communities across the United States that offer cultural and recreational experiences different from the typical vacation destination. From dynamic downtowns and stunning architecture to cultural diversity and commitments to historic preservation, the selected destinations boast a richness of character and exude an authentic sense of place.

The birthplace of prize-winning playwright, Tennessee Williams, Columbus is home to three National Register Historic Districts that boast an impressive 676 properties. While other cities were ravaged during the Civil War, Columbus was a "hospital town," leaving the antebellum and Victorian homes-along with their contents-spared. Tours of these architectural gems abound. Whether taking a guided walking tour or winding through the scenic area by car, visitors are able to experience 19th century living first-hand. Attractions include Waverley Plantation Mansion, a National Historic Landmark and one of the most photographed homes of the South; Friendship Cemetery, the site of the first Memorial Day celebration in 1866; and the Mississippi University for Women, the oldest public college for women in the United States and home to 23 National Register properties.

Founded in 1821 on the banks of the Tombigbee River, the town thrives on its rich heritage and Southern charm. Columbus offers an extraordinary mix of history, natural beauty and culture. Its revitalized Main Street, bustling with family-owned businesses, treasure-filled emporiums and culinary delights, is endlessly appealing and pulsates with the rhythms of the blues.

Proud of its rich African American heritage, Columbus also offers tours of landmarks that showcase the remarkable impact the African American community has had on the city. The itinerary includes churches, universities and homes. From Catfish Alley, a central business district for African Americans during the late 19th century to Concord CME Church, one of the oldest churches in Columbus dating back to 1867, and the Robert Walker Home Site, where Walker was trained as a butler and went on to become the first African American to own and operate a hotel, this tour celebrates the lasting legacy of the accomplishments achieved by those, who despite oppressive times, prevailed and prospered.

"Columbus will undoubtedly surprise you with its diverse and abundant cultural resources," said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "As one of the best kept secrets in the state of Mississippi, it is an unrivalled destination for anyone who enjoys Southern architecture, savors down-home cooking, and seeks an escape to the great outdoors."

"We are excited and honored to receive this distinction. It will allow us to spotlight the rich history and culture of our city," said James Tsismanakis, executive director of the Convention & Visitors Bureau. "Columbus' art, architecture, history and culinary offerings give visitors an authentic southern experience. It is our goal to utilize this honor to increase our tourism and share our charming community with the world."

Columbus' location on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway-nicknamed the Tenn-Tom-offers numerous opportunities for outdoor recreation. One of the top sports fishing spots in the nation, Tenn-Tom is a 234-mile stretch that connects middle America with the Gulf Coast. It is ideal for scenic boat tours, water



This is the ninth time the National Trust for Historic Preservation has announced a list of *Dozen Distinctive Destinations*. To date, there are 108 *Distinctive Destinations* located in 42 states throughout the country. To see a complete list, visit www.nationaltrust.org. In each community, residents have taken forceful action to protect their town's character and sense of place.

Whether by enacting a local preservation law to protect historic buildings against demolition, rewriting zoning codes to prevent commercial sprawl, removing regulatory barriers to downtown housing, making downtown areas more walkable, enacting design standards, or taking some other major step that demonstrates a strong commitment to their town, residents have worked hard to preserve the historic and scenic assets of their communities, with rewards that transcend town limits.

To download high resolution images of this year's Dozen Distinctive Destinations, please visit
<http://press.nationaltrust.org/>.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a non-profit membership organization bringing people together to protect, enhance and enjoy the places that matter to them. By saving the places where great moments from history - and the important moments of everyday life - took place, the National Trust for Historic Preservation helps revitalize neighborhoods and communities, spark economic development and promote environmental sustainability. With headquarters in Washington, DC, nine regional and field offices, 29 historic sites, and partner organizations in all 50 states, the National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education, advocacy and resources to a national network of people, organizations and local communities committed to saving places, connecting us to our history and collectively shaping the future of America's stories.